

Evidence-based resources for home-supported learning

Communicating with families - tips for schools

Communicating with families to encourage involvement in their child's learning is consistently associated with positive outcomes.

Approach summary

The success of home-supported learning is likely to be impacted by the quality of school-home communication. Positive communications that relate to learning, that consults parents on decisions and respond to parent's preferences have the added outcome of building trust.

Carefully designed school communications can have a positive impact on parent's beliefs and behaviours. Communication has the greatest impact when:

- It links to learning;
- It is tailored for the age of the students (for young students, provide parents with tips on supporting learning, for older students, parents respond positively to knowing when tasks are occurring and progress information);
- The frequency is appropriate (not too often, but when necessary);
- It is personalised to the family and student;
- It provides families with practical strategies to support their child;
- It invites families to engage in a two-way conversation.

Tips

- Use existing channels of communication where they are in place.
- Invite parents to securely upload pictures of the activities that younger children have done to share feedback and start conversations.
- Speak with families about their preferences (do they prefer engaging with text messages, email, an online platform, phone calls?).
- Monitor the effectiveness of your communications and reach out to families who might need additional support or who don't respond to the current communication methods.

What should I consider?

- How will I use existing online platforms and applications to communicate between school and home? (One approach is unlikely to reach everyone)
- Can I communicate directly with secondary students? What are the school policies in place to guide this action?
- How many messages are families receiving from my school? (Be mindful to co-ordinate your school's response and not overwhelm families during this time)
- What do I need to be mindful about when communicating with parents who are from CALD backgrounds, or with students who may be experiencing vulnerabilities? (e.g. disability or living out of home)

This resource has been developed from our Guidance Report [Working with parents to support student's learning](#).